

#1

In this issue: **COLOR**

\$1⁵⁰

U.K. 95p

Imagine



FRANK
CIBICCO
©1980



27 March 1978: Birthday
Oakland, CA.

You know, you'd think that after four years now it'd be pretty easy to just introduce another comic into the line-up here. It isn't. Already there's been big editorial hassles, big photographic hassles and big printing hassles. I guess the old rule of thumb that it takes three or four issues to hit one's stride must be true. I hope you bear with us.

Briefly, this magazine starts as a spin-off of our popular STAR*REACH series. Five of our eight contributors have previously contributed to STAR*REACH. This overlap exists partially because there's more good material available to me now than can fit in one quarterly title, partially to help immediately transfer the sales appeal of STAR*REACH to another magazine.

But IMAGINE is not going to long remain "just" a spin-off. Already in stories lined up for the future it is beginning to adapt a place of its own. As STAR*REACH will concentrate on sf/fantasy material, with a growing emphasis on continuing series, IMAGINE will attempt to encompass dramatic material from many different areas: if the stories are good, we'll run a western here, or a detective story, something topically located, even ("shudder") a superhero. We won't exclude fantasy or sf material (that still seems to be the area most contributors want to explore), but we're not going to key on it.

Leading things off in this premiere effort is an "allegorical fantasy" (if you will) from Neal Adams and Frank Cirrocco, one that I guarantee will give you a pleasantly surprising twist at the end. Neal is one of our field's most respected talents and we're pleased to have him help kick things off. One presumes you've seen his entertaining SUPERMAN VS MUHAMMAD ALI comic from DC Comics; if not, it's recommended. Frank is a relative newcomer to comics. He's worked with Adams in New York's Continuity Graphics studio and has helped form his own art studio in San Jose, California, called Horizon Zero Graphiques.

"Anticipation" by Dave Sim and Fabio Gasbarri is by the same team of Canadians who produced "I'm God" in STAR*REACH #7 (still one of my personal favorites). This offering is in a totally different vein, but I believe just as effective.

Lee Marrs relates that she originally had an idea for something close to her "Making It" vignette planned for submission to ARCADE magazine a couple of years ago, only to see ARCADE fold. Their loss is our gain.

Marshall Rogers is known to me primarily thru his work, especially his incredibly good Batman stories for DC Comics. Here he provides our debut color section with a highly visual rendition of a "Disputed Sacrifice" (my title). If you don't "get it" at the end, refer back to the opening page... it should become quite clear.

The last two stories in the book, "The Nimrod Fusion" by Steve Grant and Rich Larson and "The Garbagemen" by Gene Day and Fabio Gasbarri are both more "traditional sf stories, but I think you'll find they are quite uniquely presented. All four of these guys are from way out of town to me (though Rich has just recently relocated in nearby Berkeley) and I can't give you much personal detail on them.

This book is being released so late from our original projection that the second issue is nearing completion of its artwork. Leading off will be a cover and color story by Craig Russell (whose full-color PARSIFAL book will be issued by us soon). Also in the issues are stories by Trina and Steve Leialoha (how's that for a combo?), Lee Marrs and Mike Vosburg, Gene Day and Michael Gilbert. I think (if some of the production bugs can be ironed out) that you'll enjoy it even more than this issue. Look for IMAGINE #2 shortly.

Mike Friedrich

IMAGINE (#1) is published quarterly by Star*Reach Productions, P.O. Box 385, Hayward, CA 94543; Mike Friedrich, editor and publisher. ©Copyright 1978 Star*Reach Productions. World Rights Reserved. "Flightmare" ©1978 Neal Adams and Frank Cirrocco. "Anticipation" ©1978 Dave Sim and Fabio Gasbarri. "Making It" ©1978 Lee Marrs. "Disputed Sacrifice" ©1978 Marshall Rogers. "The Nimrod Fusion" ©1977 Steven Grant and Richard Larson. "The Garbagemen" ©1977 Gene Day and Fabio Gasbarri. Address all inquiries c/o Star*Reach Productions.

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FIRST PRINTING: April, 1978; SECOND PRINTING: May, 1978.
ADDITIONAL COPIES: \$1.50 plus 35¢ postage/handling. Mailed 1st Class. No subscriptions, sorry.

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FLIGHTMARE



STORY: NEAL ADAMS ART: FRANK CIOCCO



LEVELING AT
30,000 FEET,
CAPTAIN.



CHRIST,
HOW DID I GET
STUCK WITH SUCH
A LOW
ASSIGNMENT?

TRAINING A
WOMAN TO PILOT
A COMMERCIAL
AIRLINER...

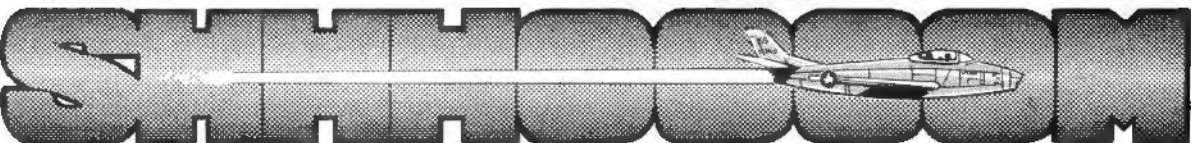
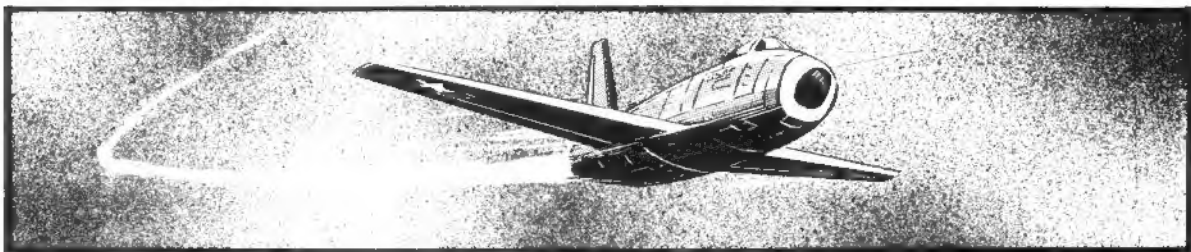
...STICKIN'
THEIR DAMN
NOSES INTO EVERY
THING THESE
DAYS.

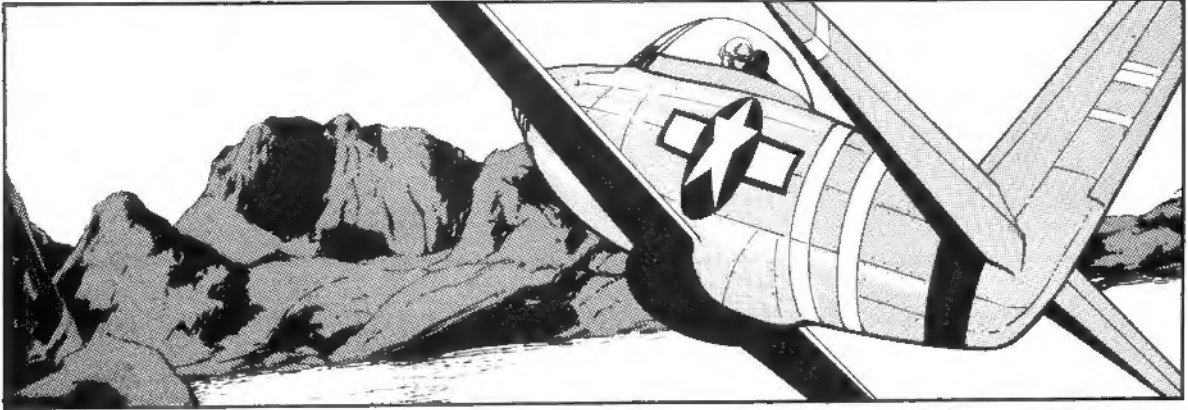


USED TO
BE THE ONLY
FLIERS THAT SHARED
THE SKIES WERE
MEN AND THE
BIRDS...

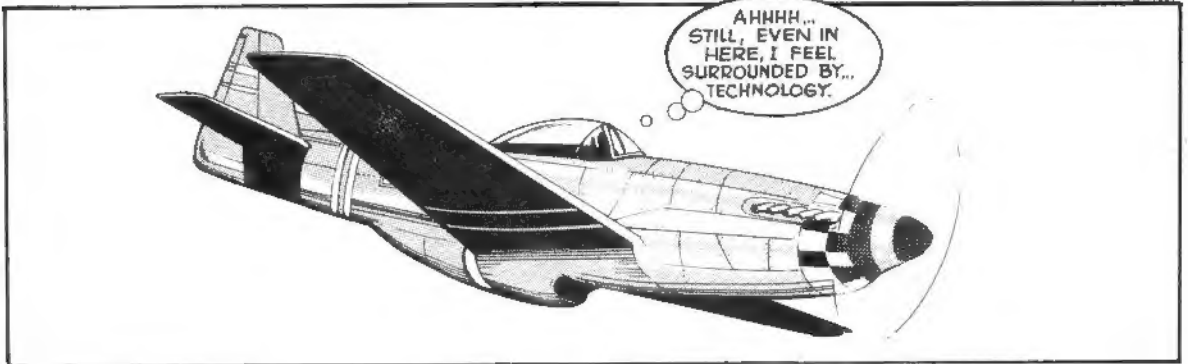
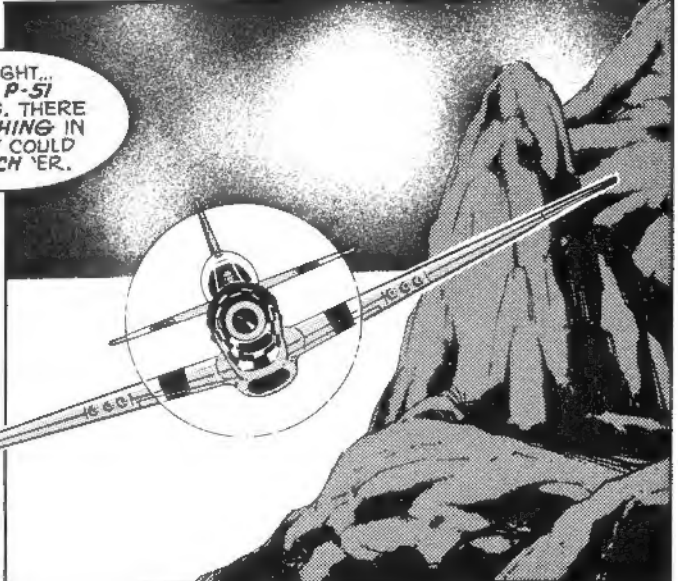


DOESN'T
SEEM
THAT LONG
AGO...

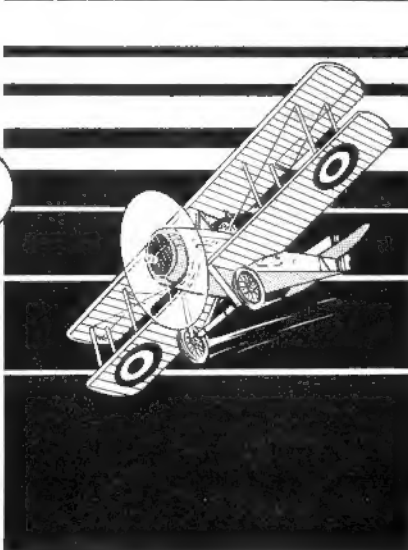
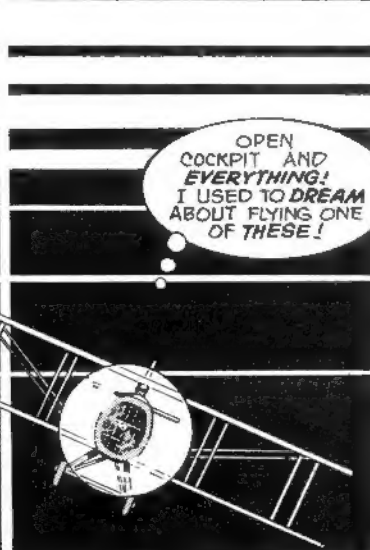
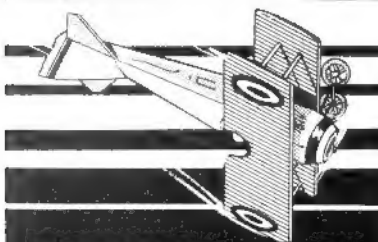


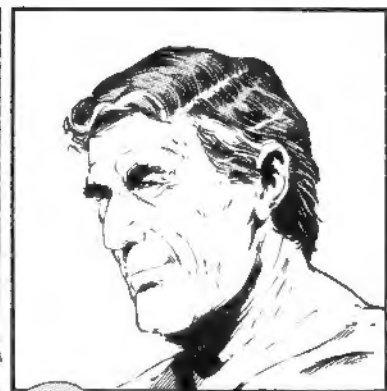


ALL RIGHT...
MY OLD P-51
MUSTANG. THERE
WAS NOTHING IN
THE SKY COULD
MATCH 'ER.

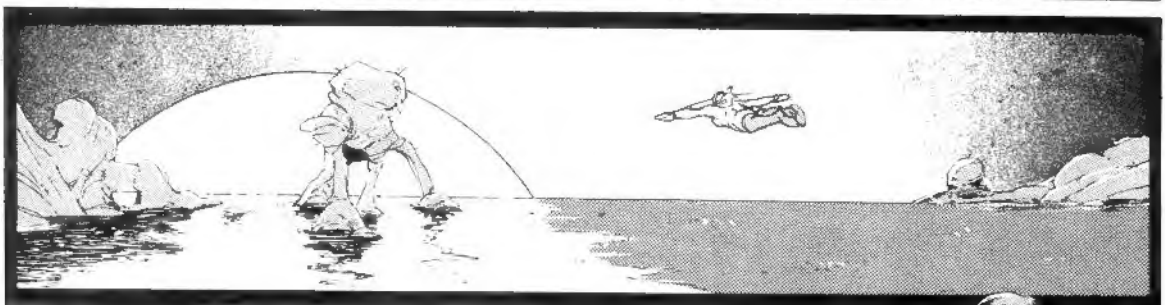


AHHH...
STILL, EVEN IN
HERE, I FEEL
SURROUNDED BY...
TECHNOLOGY.





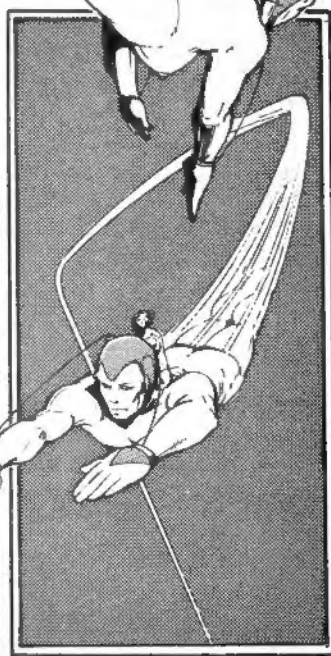
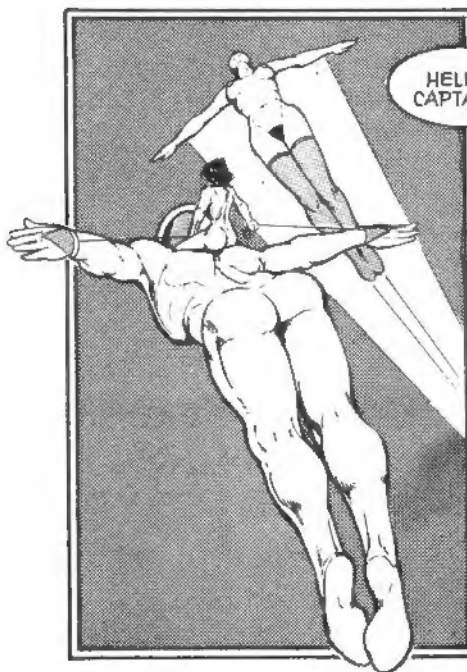
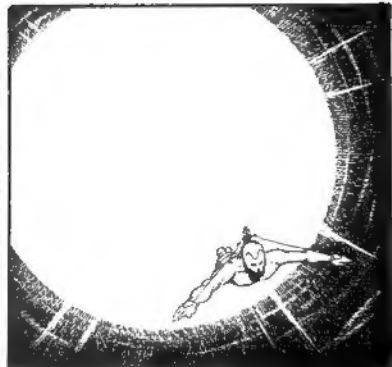
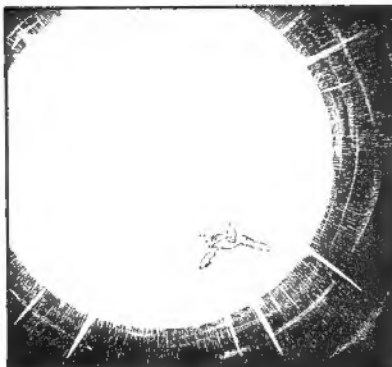
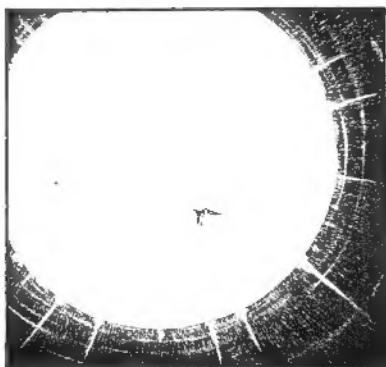
NOW, THIS
IS PERFECT!
AND I'VE GOT
IT ALL TO
MYSELF!

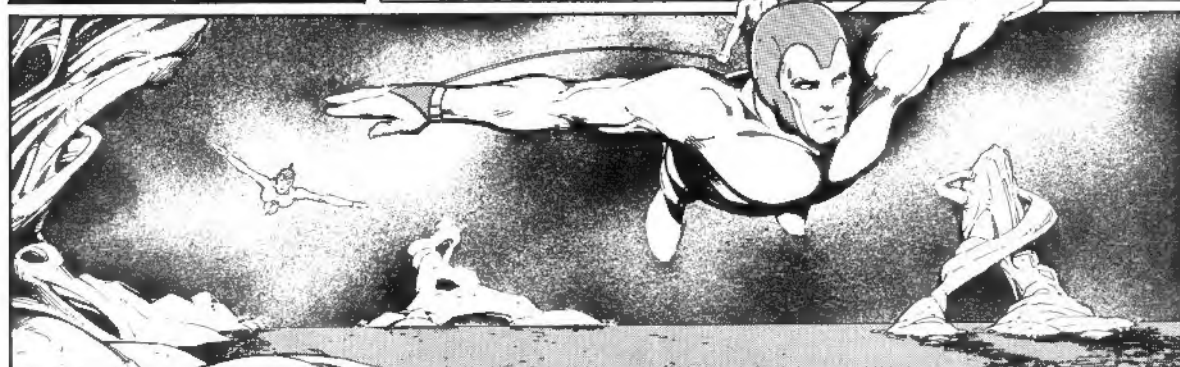
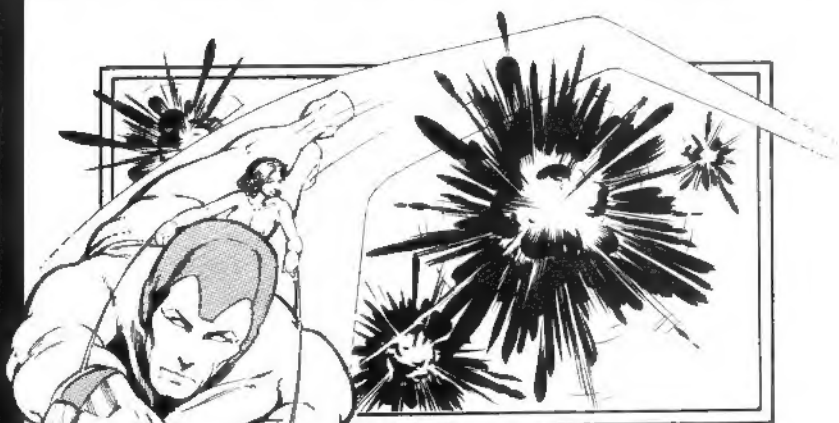
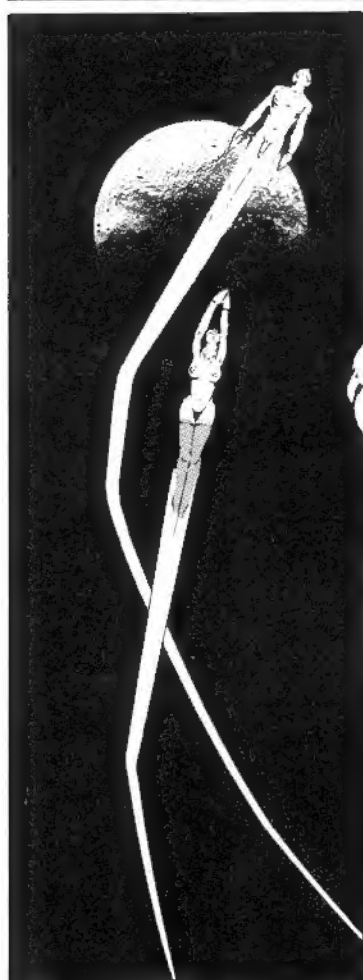


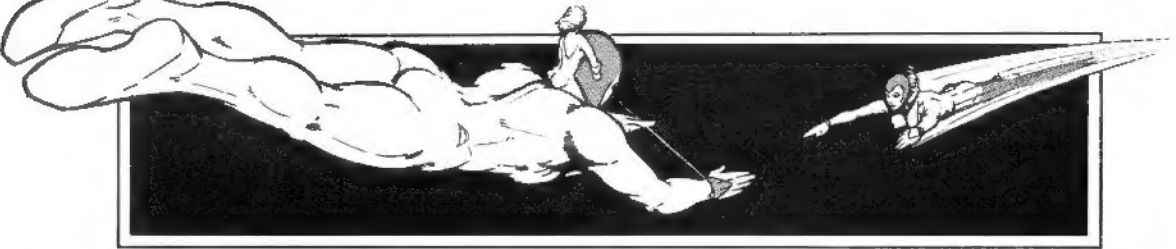
THIS IS
THE WAY
FLIGHT WAS
MEANT
TO BE!

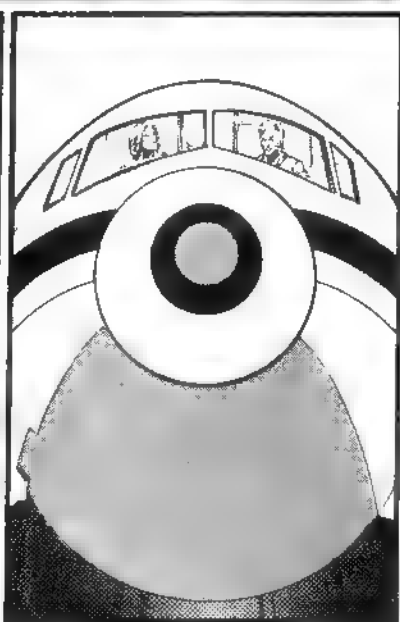
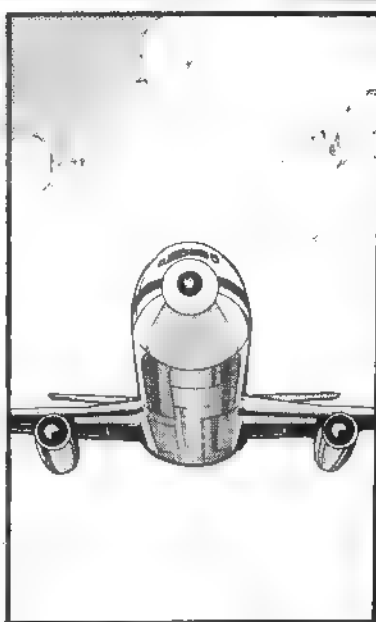
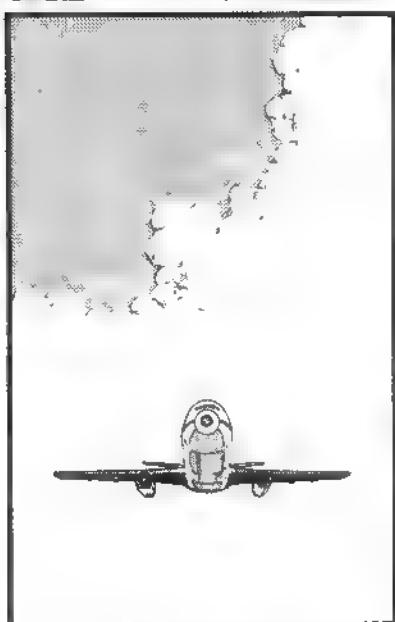
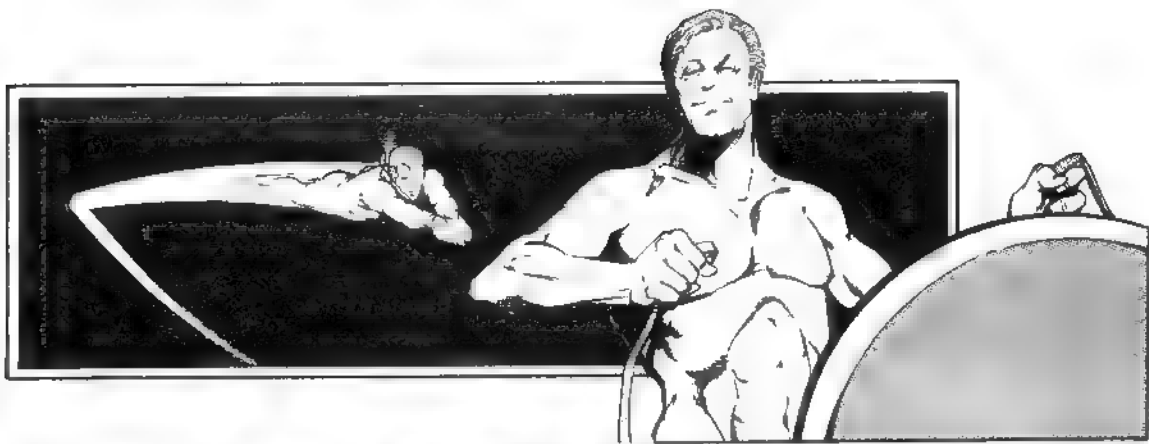


Ek?









GOT'CHA!

END

-I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WANT ME !!!
-THIS IS JUST AN ENQUIRY...WE'RE INTERESTED IN W- YOU SAW.



-THAT'S SORT OF TOUGH, Y'KNOW !!! IT WAS ACTUALLY
A WHOLE FEELING THAT NIGHT.
-COULD YOU EXPLAIN THAT PLEASE ?



-IT WAS, WELL-ELECTRIC RIGHT? I KNOW SOMEONE
LIKE YOU HAS TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING THAT !!!
THERE WERE VERY POSITIVE VIBES, YOU COULD...
LIKE, CUT WITH A KNIFE, Y'KNOW.



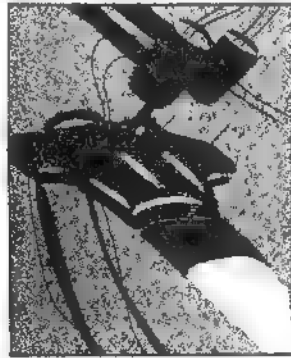
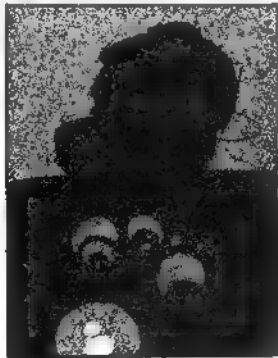
— COULD YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC?

— THERE'S NO SPECIFIC ABOUT IT, MAN ... IT WAS THE MAN HIMSELF ... EVERYBODY LOVED HIM ... WE ALL KNEW HIM BETTER THAN OUR OWN FRIENDS ... I KNEW MORE ABOUT HIS CHILDHOOD THAN MY OWN, F'CHRIST'S SAKE ...



Anticipation

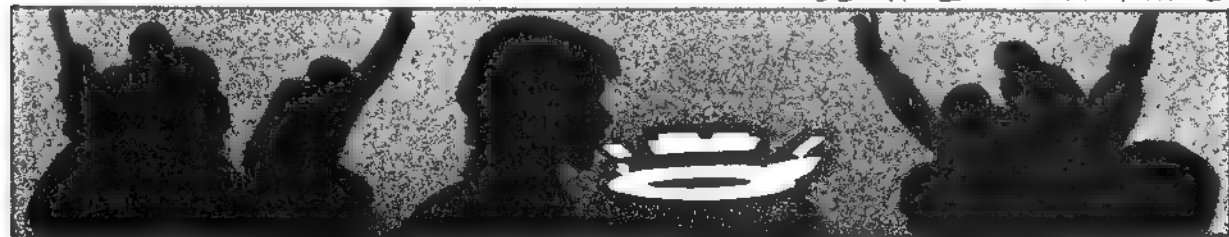
— NOW, ABOUT THE INCIDENT AT TEN O'CLOCK, YOU SAID --
— YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ... THE INCIDENT IS NOTHING TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT! I WAS AT SHEA, MAN ... I SAW JAGGER BEFORE HE WAS, U'KNOW, JAGGER! I WAS AT WOOD GODDAM STOCK — THEY WERE NOTHIN', MAN, NOTHIN'!



IT WAS LIKE TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE LISTENING TO ONE VOICE, MAN. THE WHOLE PLACE WAS LIKE SOME KIND OF CHURCH, SORT OF!

— WHEN HE ARRIVED ON STAGE, DID YOU ...

— ARRIVED ON STAGE? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, MAN? MOST OF THE TIME AT A CONCERT YOU'RE WATCHING



FIVE PLACES, LIKE, TO SEE WHERE THE SINGERS GOING TO ENTER. FIVE MINUTES BEFORE HE CAME ON THE STAGE. WE KNEW HE WAS IN THE WINGS!

— ACCORDING TO OUR REPORTS, HE ENTERED BY THE WEST ENTRANCE UNDER SECTION E AND THAT HE WAS THEREFORE EFFECTIVELY BLOCKED FROM VIEW UNTIL----

—BULLSHIT, MAN! SORRY !!! I MEAN THAT IS JUST PURE B.S. WE KNEW! DONTASK ME HOW, BUT WE DID!



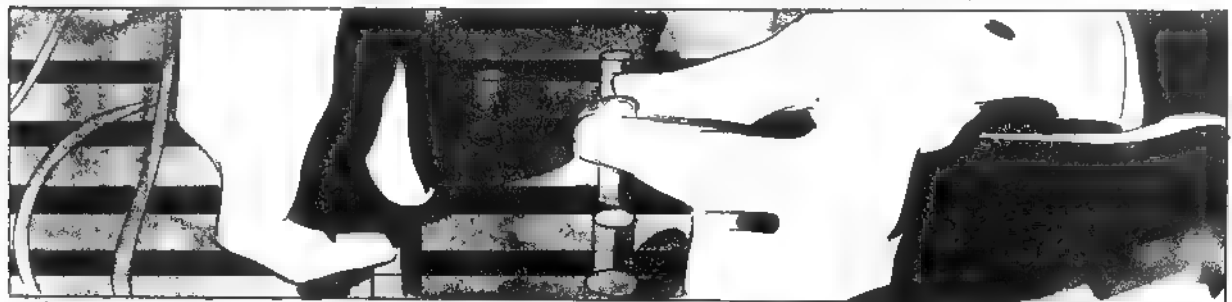
AND THEN HE WAS THERE, JUST HIM AND HIS KEYBOARDS

THE PLACE WAS BEDLAM! EVERYONE WAS JUST PROJECTING ALL THIS LOVE AT HIM.

HE WAS EIGHT BARS INTO THE SONG BEFORE ANYBODY HEARD HE WAS PLAYING AND THEN THERE WAS, LIKE, ABSOLUTE SILENCE, MAN—LIKE HE WAS OUR, YOU KNOW, OUR MESSIAH OR SOMETHING.



THE PERFORMANCE WAS A DREAM COME TRUE, MAN—ALL HIS OLDIES AND HIS NEW STUFF—BANG, BANG, BANG WITHOUT A BREAK! INCREDIBLE SHIT, MAN — WHEN YOU SAW HOW THE AUDIENCE WAS "



—HE WAS SO INTO IT MAN—YOU COULD FEEL THE CONCENTRATION—FEEL HIM FEEDING OFF THE AUDIENCE AND ALL OF THIS INCREDIBLE REACTION! IT WAS LIKE HE WAS PLAYING THE OLD STUFF FOR THE FIRST TIME AGAIN! HE'S DOING THESE INCREDIBLY COMPLEX CHORD CHANGES LIKE THEY WERE NOTHING! CHORD BY CHORD, EACH SONG IS CHANGING INTO THE NEXT ONE " AND EVERYBODY IN THE PLACE IS RECOGNIZING IT AT THE SAME TIME AND THERE'S AN EXPLOSION OF PENT UP APPLAUSE—LIKE IT'S THE SONG WE CAME FOR, MAN " AND THEN " THEN " —THEN WHAT?



—OH, CHRIST— IT'S JUST OVER MY SHOULDER TO THE LEFT — AND — AND I JUST SEE THE GLINT OF LIGHT ON THE BARREL AND I WANT TO SCREAM... A WARNING, SHOUT OR — BUT I'M JUST WATCHING IT — LIKE A MOVIE OR SOMETHING



IT CATCHES HIM HIGH — THE CHEST OR THE " OR THE NECK — PULLS HIM HALF WAY AROUND AND, LIKE " SIX INCHES OFF THE STAGE.



— AND THEN YOU NOTICE " — I DIDN'T NOTICE NOTHING, MAN — SOME PEOPLE SCREAMING BEHIND ME — EVERYONE ON THEIR FEET TO GET A BETTER LOOK — I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING BUT PEOPLE IN FRONT OF ME PUSHING AND STRETCHING TO SEE " HIM, TO SEE " THE STAGE.



WE LOVED HIM, MAN — WE ALL DID!!! I HAD NEVER SEEN A PERFORMANCE LIKE IT. HE!!! IT WAS JUST SO INCREDIBLE — ASK ANYBODY THAT WAS THERE.



— WELL, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND IF WE NEED ANYMORE INFORMATION, WE'LL !!!
— YEAH, BUT, ITS FUNNY MAN — FUNNY? FUNNY IN WHAT WAY?



— I'VE BEEN TO THREE CONCERTS SINCE THEN !!!
AND BELIEVE ME MAN — ITS THERE...



YOU CAN SMELL IT IN THE AIR
SMOTHERING THE ENTIRE BUILDING.



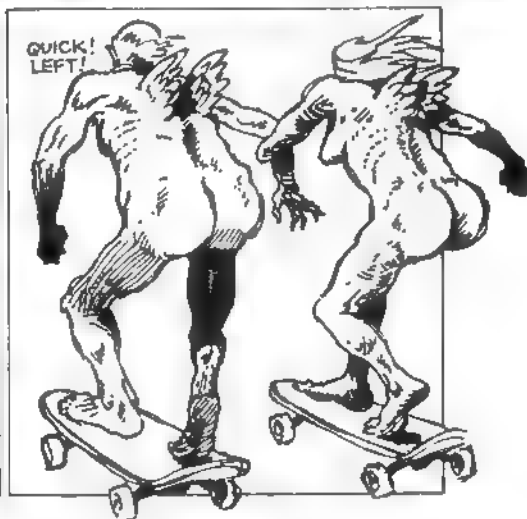
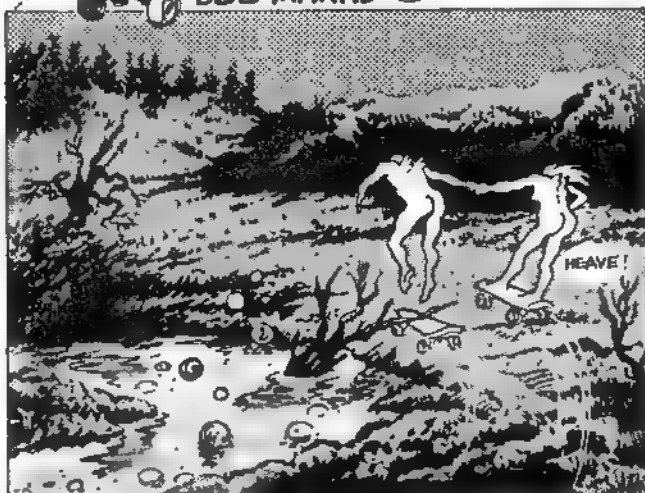
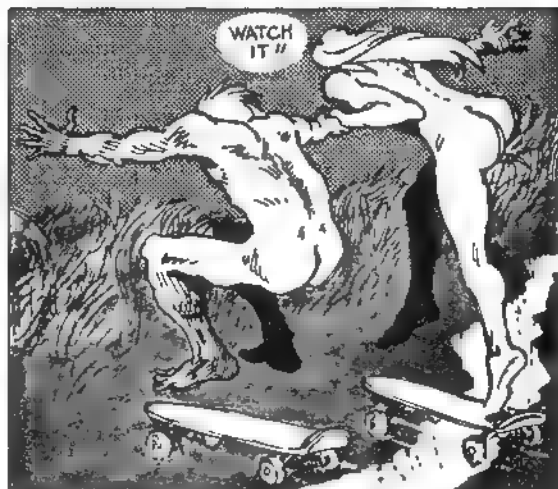
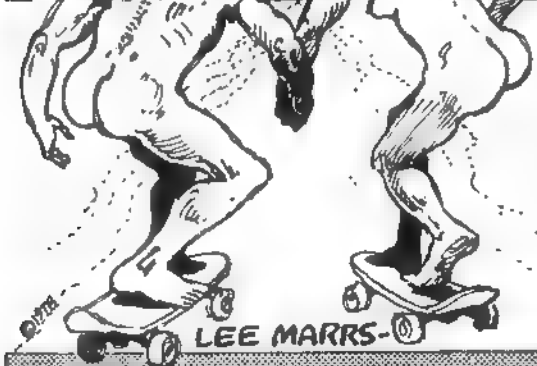
— WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
— THE ANTICIPATION, MAN !!!




...THE ANTICIPATION!

END

MAKING IT



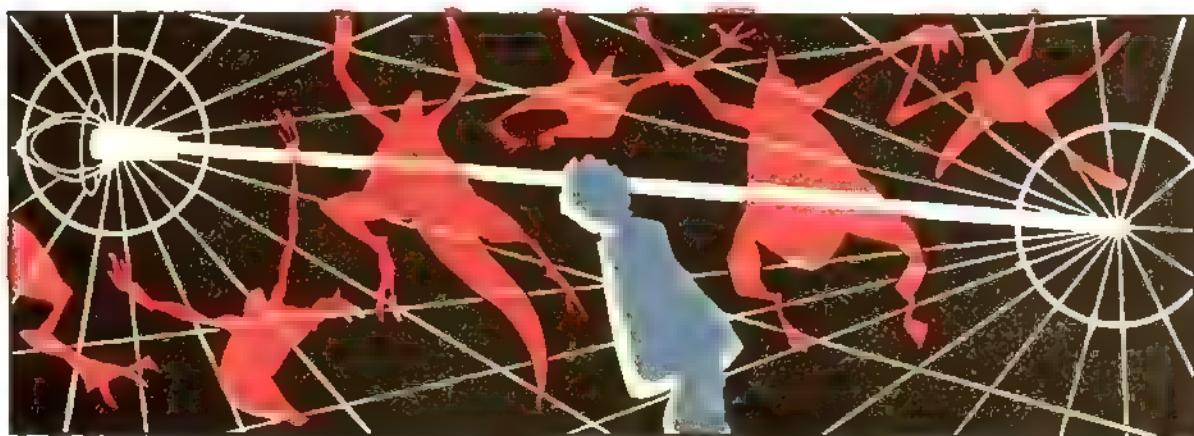


TIME STANDS STILL AS
ZXERAXERLIS PREPARES THE
MILLENNIUM ANNUAL SACRIFICE
OF THE VIRGIN QLEEN TO
DAUSMANALLANDRA, THE DEITY
OF THE COSMIC CESSPOOL.

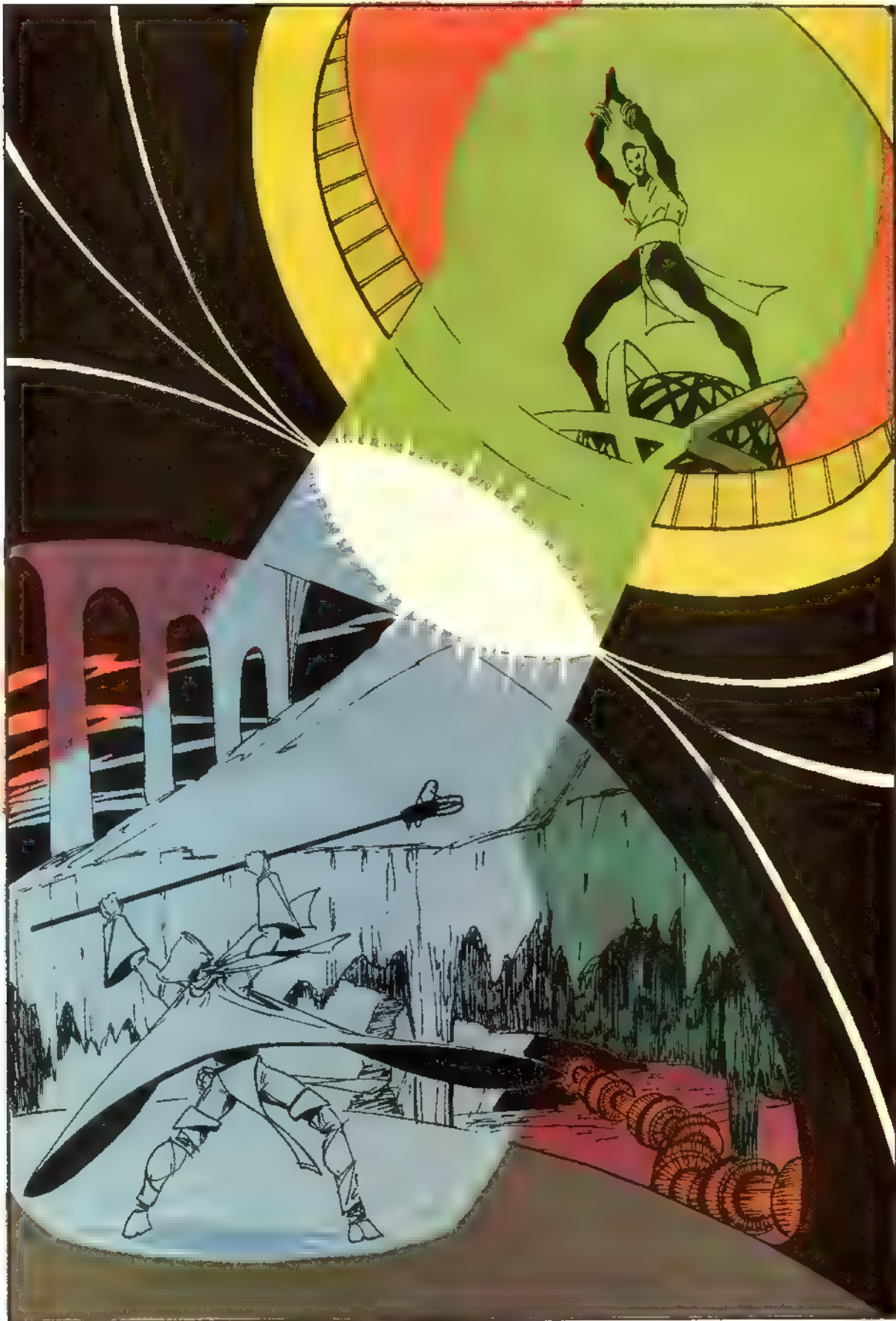
THE VIRGIN MUST BE
SACRIFICED TO KEEP THE FLOW
OF INTERGALACTIC WASTE
FROM PENETRATING HIS
FRACTION OF THE UNIVERSE.

IF THIS QUEEN CANNOT BE
SACRIFICED IN HER VIRGIN
STATE, HIS REALM BECOMES
THE COSMIC TOILET.

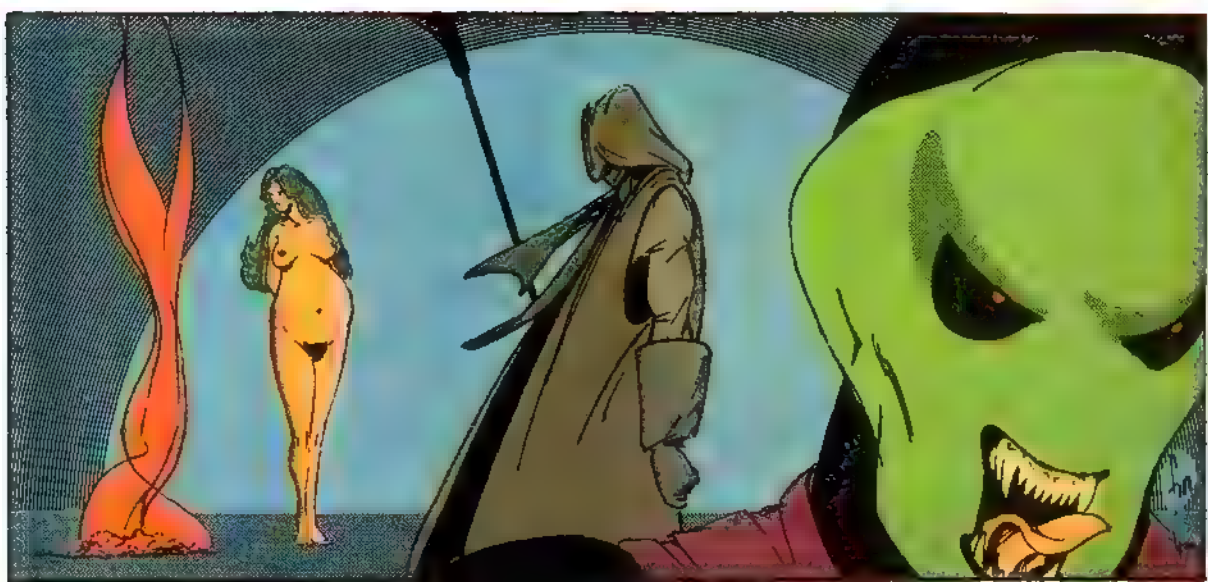
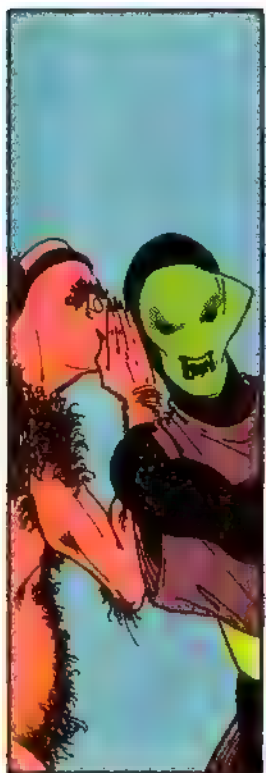












JULY 5. GREAT VICTORIA DESERT, AUSTRALIA.

HIDDEN BY THE DUNES, HIS MOUTH DRY FROM THE HEAT AND THE ANTICIPATION OF THE KILL... DONOVAN WAITS FOR HIS PREY.

A MEMBER OF THE ONLY OTHER INTELLIGENT SPECIES ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH...

IT IS NOT THE NEARNESS OF A HUMAN THAT WORRIES THE ARJIN. THE LIZARD THING IS UNWARE OF DONOVAN'S PRESENCE...

OTHER THINGS TROUBLE IT'S MIND. THE TERRITORY THE ARJIN HAVE LOST...

THE IMPENDING EXTINCTION OF THE RACE...

NO PEACE IS POSSIBLE BETWEEN HUMAN AND ARJIN... NO COMPROMISE...

THE TWO SPECIES ARE AS NATURAL ENEMIES AS SNAKE... AND MONGOOSE...

IT BEGINS NOW IN DONOVAN

THE SWIRL OF ENERGY IN THE CHEST...

THE HATRED THAT BEGINS IN THE HEART...

IT FLOWS WITH HIS BLOOD THROUGH HIS ENTIRE SYSTEM GATHERING FORCE, GATHERING STRENGTH...

A TREMBLE TWISTING THROUGH HIM, COAGULATING FINALLY IN THE CEREBRAL COLUMN...

CRACKLING THROUGH THE SURGICALLY-IMPLANTED NEURODISCS IN HIS SKULL...

POWER READY. MUST HOLD IT! HOLD IT! HOLD IT! TO BE TRIGGERED BY THE HELMET/RIFLE...

THE GLORIOUS POWER OF... HATE!

... AND SUDDENLY, THE ARJIN KNOWS...

YEAH, YOU'RE GOOD, FROGGY. REAL GOOD...

THE HATRED HAS INVADDED DONOVAN...

EVERY MUSCLE, EVERY NERVE, EVERY SYNAPSE GONE TO IT...

DESPITE THE MAD, SWARMING EMOTION, DONOVAN HAS HELD IT BACK, KEPT IT IN, PUSHED THE HATE ENERGY TO THE OPTIMUM.

UNTIL IT HAS BECOME PURE FORCE... MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN A LASER... OR AN ATOM BOMB.

NOW, HE LETS IT GO!

BUT ME... I'M THE BEST...

DEATH IS SUDDEN, PAINFUL, INSTANTANEOUS. RAW POWER SNAPS THROUGH THE ARJIN, FUSING EVERY NERVE, EVERY SYNAPSE, EVEN THE CIRCUITRY IN THE POWER PACK ON ITS BACK...

IN THE LAST MAD, NERVOUS SHOCK, THE PAIN FREEZES ETERNALLY ON THE ARJIN'S FACE...

DONOVAN IS PLEASED. HE LIKES TO WATCH THEIR FACES AS THEY DIE...

HUNTER DONOVAN TO
HUNT CONTROL.

PLEASE
ACKNOWLEDGE
COMMANDER.

PLEASE
REPORT.

RECEIVING
AND
RECORDING
DONOVAN...

THE WAR IS
NOW IN ITS
FINAL STAGE.

FROM THEIR
THREE-YEAR
CONTROL OF
THE SOUTHERN
HEMISPHERE
THE ARJN HAVE
BEEN DRIVEN
BACK TO THIS
LAST STRONGHOLD,
THE AUSTRALIAN
DESERTS AND
PLAINS...

MASSIVE STRUGGLE IS NO
LONGER NECESSARY; VOLUNTEERS
HUNT DOWN THE REMAINING ARJN. THE
LIZARD BEINGS HAVE ALREADY BEEN BEATEN, BUT
THIS IS NOT ENOUGH... HUMANITY REQUIRES THEIR TOTAL
EXTERMINATION DUE TO PROBLEMS BOTH PHYSIOLOGICAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL. NO INTELLECTUAL CONTACT HAS EVER BEEN MADE BETWEEN

THE TWO SPECIES.
THE FIRST CONTACT
HAS JUST BEGUN.

FOR DONOVAN,
IT IS THE BEGINNING
OF TERROR...

THE NINETY-FIVE

© 1977

STORY - STEVEN GRANT

ART - RICHARD LARSON

DONOVAN REPORTING:
HAVE ELIMINATED
ANOTHER FROG UH
ARJN PLEASE
ACKNOWLEDGE
KILL OVER

KILL ACKNOWLEDGED AND RECORDED
DONOVAN

REQUEST YOU RETURN TO BASE IMMEDIATELY...

COME BACK? THESE
BLOODY FROGS ARE
STILL CRAWLING ALL
OVER THIS DESERT.
COMMANDER, I
CAN'T JUST...

YOU HAVE YOUR
ORDERS, HUNTER
THERE ARE
DISCREPANCIES...
IN YOUR
MEDICALS...

WE SUSPECT YOU MAY HAVE BECOME
MENTALLY UNFIT FOR FIELD DUTY

UNFIT? COMMANDER, YOU KNOW I'M
YOUR BEST...

HUNTER DONOVAN:
THIS IS A DIRECT ORDER! DO
YOU UNDERSTAND?

IT IS THE CHANGE IN THE PITCH OF THE
COMMANDER'S VOICE THAT DONOVAN NOTICES
FIRST, NOT THE FIGURE JAGGING TOWARD HIM...

NOT THE WORLD
SLIPPING AWAY...

AND THEN

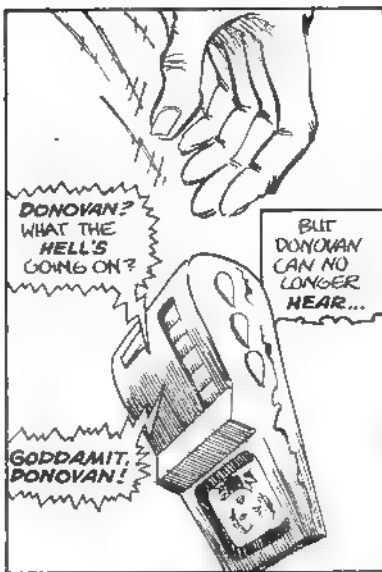
TRACKER 7 REPORT
I HAVE FOUND THE
HUMAN FLEEING FROM
TRACKER 19 HE
APPEARS IN A STATE
OF Hysteria HIS
WEAPON APPEARS
RUINED INSTRUCTIONS

OH
GOD?
NO

CAPTURE
UNNECESSARY,
TRACKER
LIQUIDATE IT.

N...NOOOOOO...

HUMAN
LIQUIDATED!



DONOVAN?
WHAT THE
HELL'S
GOING ON?

GODDAMIT,
DONOVAN!

BUT
DONOVAN
CAN NO
LONGER
HEAR...

THE SMOLDERING CORPSE IS FADING,
BEFORE HIM (WHAT WAS IT? IT'S?
NAME? HE CANNOT EVEN RECALL,
ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE ARUN
STILL, THE GUILT RISES INSIDE, A
LINGERING HORROR FROM
THE VIEWPOINT OF THE VISION...



AS THOUGH IT WAS (WAS IT?)
HIS OWN HAND THAT SHOT
THE HUNTER DOWN,

AND THEN NOTHING IS LEFT
BUT THE DESERT. DONOVAN
CAN STILL FEEL THE COOLNESS
OF THE GUN AT HIS (HIS?)
FINGERS, CAN STILL SMELL
THE SEARED FLESH, CAN
STILL HEAR THE
HUNTER'S LAST
DISPAIRING RATTLE

AND ALL AROUND
HIM, ONLY THE
DESERT...

THE DESERT
CANNOT FEEL.
IT DOES NOT
HEAR. IT DOES
NOT CARE.



DAMN.

THE DESERT WILL SURVIVE..

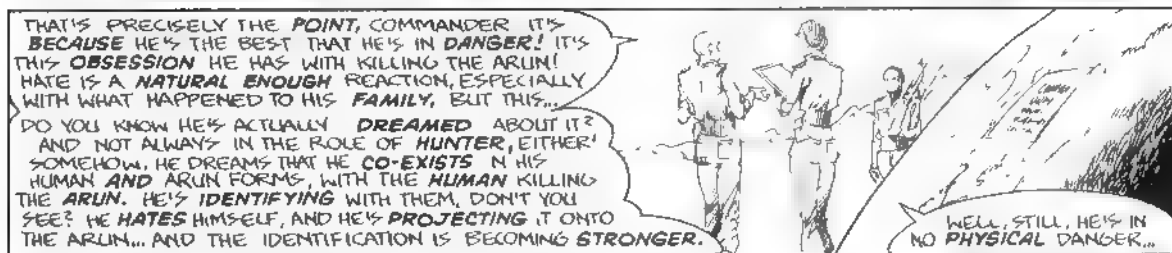


HIS CONDITION MUST BE
DETERIORATING MORE QUICKLY
THAN I'D REALIZED.

I STILL THINK YOU'RE
WORRYING TOO MUCH,
DOCTOR.

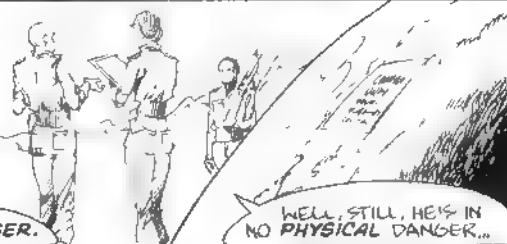
HUNTER CONTACT
BROKEN...
LOCATION
UNDETER-
MINED...

DONOVAN CAN TAKE
CARE OF HIMSELF, HE
IS THE BEST WE'VE GOT!

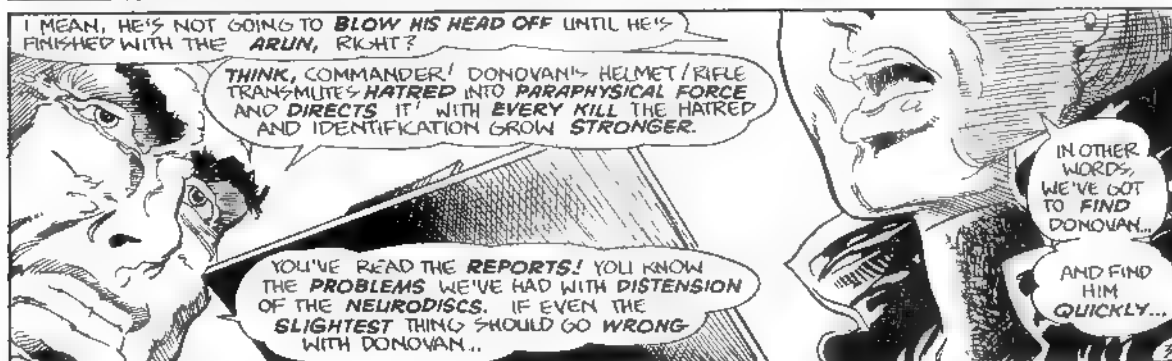


THAT'S PRECISELY THE POINT, COMMANDER! IT'S
BECAUSE HE'S THE BEST THAT HE'S IN DANGER! IT'S
THIS OBSESSION HE HAS WITH KILLING THE ARUN!
HATE IS A NATURAL ENOUGH REACTION, ESPECIALLY
WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS FAMILY, BUT THIS...

DO YOU KNOW HE'S ACTUALLY DREAMED ABOUT IT?
AND NOT ALWAYS IN THE ROLE OF HUNTER, EITHER!
SOMEHOW, HE DREAMS THAT HE CO-EXISTS IN HIS
HUMAN AND ARUN FORMS, WITH THE HUMAN KILLING
THE ARUN. HE'S IDENTIFYING WITH THEM, DON'T YOU
SEE? HE HATES HIMSELF, AND HE'S PROJECTING IT ONTO
THE ARUN... AND THE IDENTIFICATION IS BECOMING STRONGER.



WELL, STILL, HE'S IN
NO PHYSICAL DANGER...



I MEAN, HE'S NOT GOING TO BLOW HIS HEAD OFF UNTIL HE'S
FINISHED WITH THE ARUN, RIGHT?

THINK, COMMANDER! DONOVAN'S HELMET/RIFLE
TRANSMITS HATRED INTO PARAPHYSICAL FORCE
AND DIRECTS IT WITH EVERY KILL THE HATRED
AND IDENTIFICATION GROW STRONGER.

YOU'VE READ THE REPORTS! YOU KNOW
THE PROBLEMS WE'VE HAD WITH DISTENSION
OF THE NEURODISCS. IF EVEN THE
SLIGHTEST THING SHOULD GO WRONG
WITH DONOVAN...

IN OTHER
WORDS,
WE'VE GOT
TO FIND
DONOVAN...

AND FIND
HIM
QUICKLY...

"OR HE'LL DESTROY HIMSELF!"

JULY 5 GREAT VICTORIA
DESERT, AUSTRALIA. THE
WAX IS... GIBED OUT MOST OF
THE GAME IN THE CONTINENT
DINGOS "WARM ARKIN"
DONOVAN'S CAMP DRAWN
BY THE SMELL OF COOKING
MEAT. THEY DO NOT DARE
APPROACH THE FIRE... BUT
IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF
TIME BEFORE
THEY OVERCOME
THEIR FEAR
OF IT.

HUNGER "GIVES
THE WILD
TAX" ON



OH NO! PLEASE... NO! NOT AGAIN...

PLEASE!

THE WORLD BELONGS
TO "WIRL IN
THE 1st OF FLUR
AND THE LATHERED
WHITE OF FANGS
AND THE WORLD
IS "WIRLING...
"WIRLING, AND

SOMETHING
ELSE IS
"KIDING IN!"



SOME THING... A "WIRL" IN... DARK METAL
HALLWAYS ILLUMINATED BY INHUMAN PINKISH
LIGHT, THE HEAVY FOOTFALLS
LINE UP "LUMIN" THAT AND
SHOCKS UP DONOVAN.
LEO.

I AM ANOTHER
PLACE, THE "WIRL" LUMIN
SHEN ARKIN VOICE... A
DANDY ALCOHOL TASTE
YET DONOVAN IS
NOT THERE

SOMETHING
ELSE IS
IN HIM!



THE ARKIN "WIRL" WIND FLOWING "THRILLINGLY INTO ITS
FACE... "WIRLING" A GUN... IN ITS HAND, AND A
CHARGE... THE ANIMAL FALLS IN THE DISCHARGE...

THE "WIRL" OF SCORCHED
FLESH AND HAIR, YET IN
"WIRL" OF THE FLUR LUM,
THE HOT SATISFACTION
OF THE KILL...

WAS NO AM, THE PLACE
SOMETHING IS VERY
WRONG.

DAMN YOU,
HUMAN!

WHY ARE
YOU DOING
THIS?

(GET-OUT-OF-MY-MIND!)



DAMN YOU, YOU FROG! WHY
ARE YOU DOING THIS?

GET-OUT-OF-
MY-MIND!

TWO WORLDS,
TWO MINDS.



..IRISING
TOGETHER...



I HUNTER DONOVAN "WIRL" (NO!) I AM THE BEST!
AM TRACKER -7 I AM THE
HUNT ACKER DONOVAN HATE KILL HUMAN RUN THE BEST HATE HATE BEST! BEST! BEST!



TIME SPACE COLLAPSES EXPLODES IN OUT FOR HUNTER TRACKER DONOVAN SEVEN... CALMLY THE VISIONS DO NOT OSCILLATE THE "SENSES" DO NOT STROBE... EACH BODY STILL SEPARATE CARRIES ON THE MINDS BLENDING TRAPPED WATCH IN HELPLESS AGONY AND CARRY WITH THEM THE ENEMY THROUGH THEIR MOTIONS...

이제 내가 너를 볼 수 있어
너의 모든 비밀을
내가 볼 수 있어

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너의 모든 비밀을
내가 볼 수 있어

GET OUT
OF ME,
YOU
STUPID
FROG

YOU'RE GODDAMN
TEARING ME
APART!

DONOVAN HAS NEVER BEFORE SEEN A WOMAN OF THE ARUN. THE SIGHT DRIVES HIM TO NAUSEA, A LIZARD MOCKERY OF SOMETHING HUMAN. BUT EVEN AS THE BILE TWISTS UP INSIDE, HE MOVES TOWARD IT, A VISITOR, AN UNWILLING NOVELIST, INVESTED WITH REPULSION... AND WITH THE THING'S ALLURE...



이제 내가 너를 볼 수 있어
너의 모든 비밀을
내가 볼 수 있어



THE VISION CRUMPLING WITH THE LAST DYING DOG, TOUCH DIMATE, GRATING IN THE HEAT OF COMPLETE FUSION, BUT TOO LATE THE TASTE OF EACH LOCKED IN THE OTHER...



"EACH ONE AGAIN NEVER AGAIN ALONE TO FIND RELEASE IN EACH HIS OWN WAY, KNOWING..."



이제 내가 너를 볼 수 있어
너의 모든 비밀을
내가 볼 수 있어


"A SWEET DREAD INTERFACING BOTH HATED ENEMIES--THE BEST OF EACH OF THEIR BREED--BROTHERS NOW ONE THE MIGHTIEST OF HUNTERS..."



이제 내가 너를 볼 수 있어
너의 모든 비밀을
내가 볼 수 있어

"KNOWING THAT THEY MUST MEET AT LAST SOON, A MEETING BOTH NEITHER WANTS WHICH WILL, OR MUST"

END IN ANOTHER KIND OF RELEASE.



JULY 6, GREAT VICTORIA DESERT, AUSTRALIA. THE SUN BEATS DOWN ON THE DISLOCATED WORLD. AS THOUGH THE DESERT IS HOLDING ITS BREATH, NO WINDS MOVE THE QUIESCENT SANDS, IT IS A WORLD IN STASIS, UNALTERABLE BY ANY CONFLICT.

HATE. FRIENDSHIP. TERROR. HUMAN. ARJUN. THESE WORDS MEAN NOTHING TO THE DESERT. IT DOES NOT KNOW. IT DOES NOT CARE.

THE DESERT EXISTS, A SILENT WITNESS TO THIS HISTORIC MEETING.

BUT THERE IS NO HISTORY HERE.



"DONOVAN RECORDING. AS I HAVE LOST MY COMMUNICATOR, I AM TAPING THIS FOR FUTURE USE.

"DURING THE NIGHTS MY DREAMS HAVE MELDED WITH THOSE OF MY FROG DOUBLE, AND OUR MINDS HAVE NOT BEEN SEPARATE SINCE HE IS AWARE OF WHAT I AM DOING, AND HE FAVORS IT.

"I CAN SEE HIM NOW ON THE HORIZON... IT'S LIKE LOOKING AT MYSELF... A MOBIUS SENSORY WAVE... I SEE THROUGH THE FROG'S EYES, WATCHING MYSELF APPROACHING...

"EVEN NOW I HATE IT. WANT TO KILL IT... I CAN'T FUCKING TAKE THIS..."

HUNTER DONOVAN! THIS IS A MOMENTOUS EVENT! THE MUTUAL HATRED OF OUR SPECIES HAS LAID WASTE HALF A WORLD.

I DO NOT KNOW WHY THIS HAS HAPPENED, BUT OUR CONTACT IS UNIQUE!

DO YOU HATE US SO MUCH THAT YOU CAN PUT ASIDE THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD?

I DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS.

AND I DON'T WANT IT.

I CAN'T EVEN SLEEP WHILE YOU'RE ALIVE, SO FUCK THIS MOMENTOUS EVENT, FROGGY!

ONE OF US IS GOING TO DIE HERE.

YOU ARE DONOVAN, YOU ARE AMONG US ALMOST A LEGEND, A GREAT KILLER OF MY PEOPLE.

I HAVE OFTEN ENVIED YOU, BUT NOW I UNDERSTAND.

YOU HAVE THE PERFECT INSTINCT FOR IT.

THE DESERT WATCHES. THE DESERT WILL SURVIVE.

6

I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HUNT YOU IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST INTERESTING TO FIND OUT WHICH OF US WAS THE BETTER!

BUT NOW THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED.

WE MUST ACCEPT THAT WE ARE - PERHAPS WE ALWAYS WERE...

...THE SAME BEING.

NO!

I LIKE IT AS LITTLE AS YOU DO HUNTER DOMOVAN STILL WE MUST ACCEPT THIS TO KILL ONE OF US WOULD MOST CERTAINLY DESTROY THE OTHER

EVERY INSTINCT SCREAMS TO KILL YOU, BUT I HAVE NO DESIRE TO DIE IN THE PROCESS.

AGREED?

YOUR FROG SCUM KILLED MY PARENTS

AND MY CHILDREN

AND ALISON

AND YOU HUMAN 'SCUM' KILLED THOUSANDS OF MY BROTHERS, TOGETHER OUR SPECIES HAVE RUINED HALF OF THIS PLANET! WE HATE ONE ANOTHER BECAUSE OF OUR DIFFERENCES, AND OUR OBVIOUS SIMILARITIES ONLY ENFLAME THAT HATRED

I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR WANTING TO KILL ME, BUT TO SEE YOUR OWN FACE DYING...

DO YOU HONESTLY HATE YOURSELF THAT MUCH?

THE DUEL IS OVER, HUNTER DOMOVAN I CANNOT - I WILL NOT FIGHT MYSELF. WE CAN LIVE WITH THIS... CHANGE. I WILL CONTINUE MY WORK... AND YOU MAY CONTINUE ALSO...

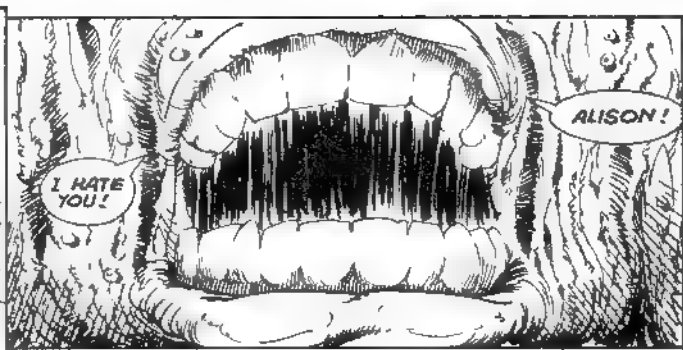
RIGHT

(GODDAMIT.)

(RIGHT.)

(I...)

I HATE YOU





WEAPONS
SWEEP AND
GLINT IN THE
DESERT SUN,
AN ACTION TOO
ROTE AND
FINAL EVEN TO
MAKE AN IMPACT
UPON
CONSCIOUSNESS...

WHICH OF THEM
FIRES FIRST, IT IS
IMPOSSIBLE
TO TELL...



LOOK WHAT
YOU'VE DONE!

IT'S THE ONLY
WAY TO LIVE -
TO LIVE WITH
THE DEAD...

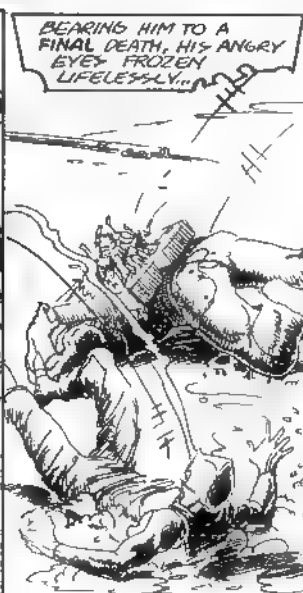


DONOVAN HAS ALREADY
SEEN THE LOOK OF
DEATH ON HIS OWN
FACE...

HAS ALREADY
GONE
BLIND
FROM THE
BLACKNESS
SWALLOWING
THE
ARUN'S
FRESHLY
DEAD
EYES...



THE FLOOD OF DEATH
WASHES OVER DONOVAN
AGAIN, A CURSE ON
HIS LIPS TO THE
OBVIOUS DESERT NOW
ARCHING UP TO
MEET HIM...



BEARING HIM TO A
FINAL DEATH, HIS ANGRY
EYES FROZEN
LIFELESSLY...

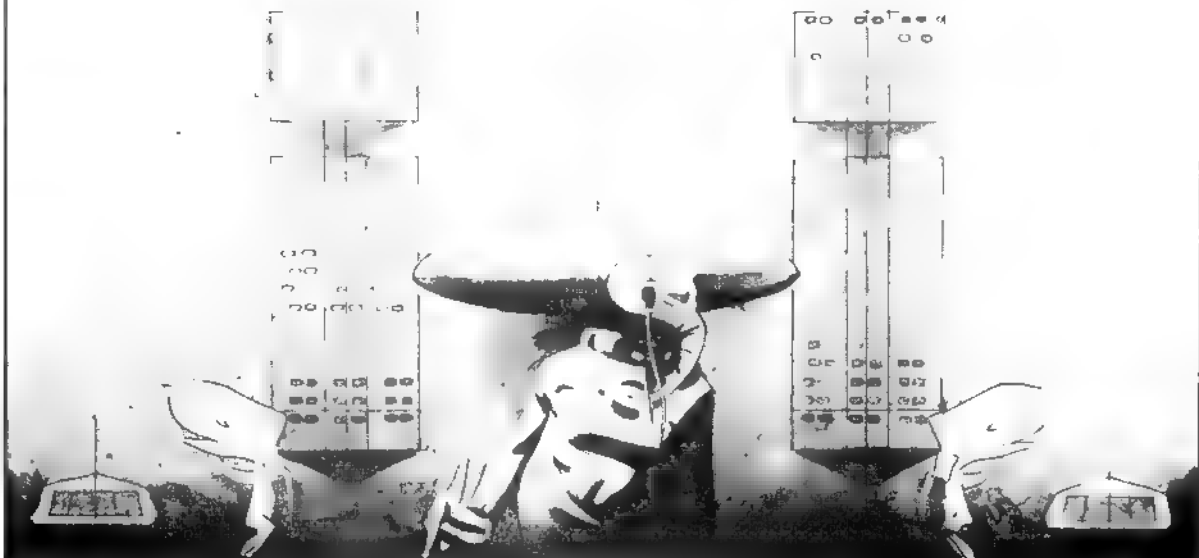


STARING AT THE MOCKING SUN...

UNTIL
THE LAST
UNALTERABLE
FUSION WITH
THE DESERT

PROLOGUE

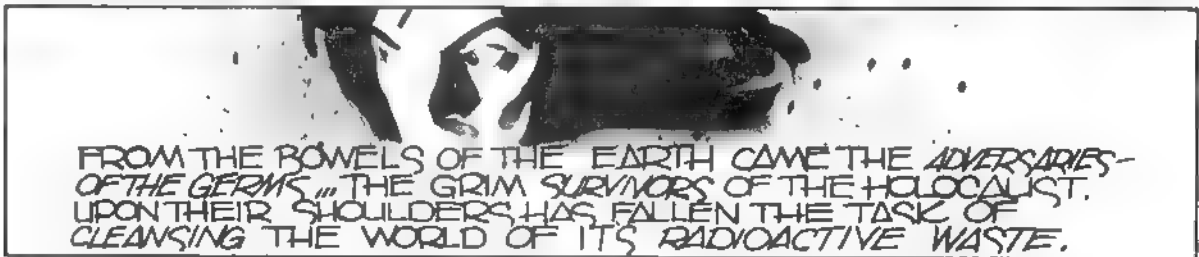
GLUTTED BUILDINGS STAND LIKE CRUMBLING TOMBS. THEIR
BROKEN BRICK SUMMITS DECKED WITH THE OBSCENE
STATUES OF NEW BORN PAGAN GODS... ALREADY
FORGOTTEN BY THEIR WORSHIPERS.



THE WIND'S HOT BREATH BRINGS THE STENCH OF DECAY
FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE ONCE GREAT CITY... TELLING
VIVIDLY THE TALE OF THE WAR THAT HAD BEEN... THE
HORROR THAT NOW WAS... AND THAT IT WAS THE RADIOACTIVE-
GERMS THAT RULED NOW IN MAN'S PLACE.



FROM THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH CAME THE ADVERSARIES-
OF THE GERMS... THE GRIM SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST.
UPON THEIR SHOULDERS HAS FALLEN THE TASK OF
CLEANSING THE WORLD OF ITS RADIOACTIVE WASTE.



DITCHFORKS IN HAND, THEY STAND... BENT AND BROKEN
BY THE WORLD ABOUT THEM... DARK WITH DESPAIR
WITHIN THEMSELVES!

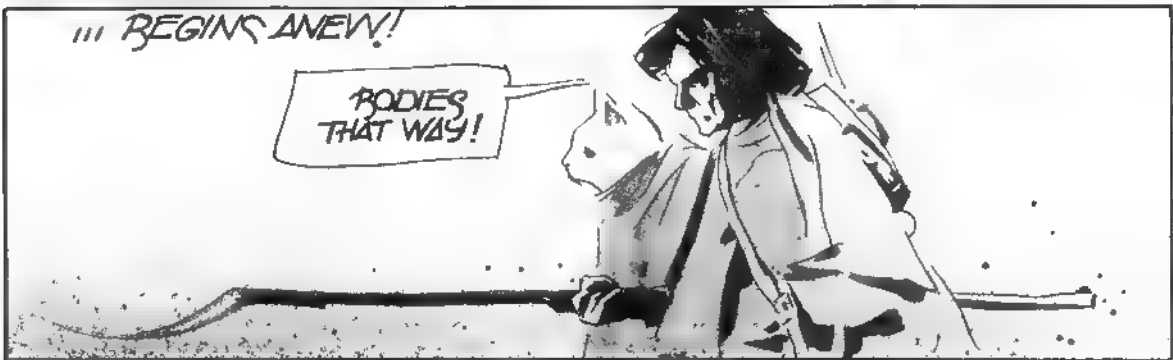


CAT'S BLAZING EYES GLARE INTO THOSE OF REFFER'S
AND THE OTHER READS THEIR MEANING WELL,
THE STRUGGLE TO REMAIN ALIVE IN THE GERM
RULED WORLD!!!



!!! BEGINS ANEW!

BODIES
THAT WAY!



I CAN SMELL
THEM FROM HERE!



AS ALWAYS !!! REFFER IS RIGHT!

WHINEEE.....





The Gambler Memo

STORY: GENE DAY, ART & CALLIGRAPHY: FABIO GASBARRI.

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THE WORK IS HARD IN THE THIN VILE AIR... REFFER
WATCHES IN SILENT THOUGHT AS CAT PUSHES THE
DECOMPOSED CORPSES INTO A SMALL GROTESQUE
HEAP. "IF I MUST DIE," HE THINKS
"LET IT BE AS A WHOLE MAN!"



"BURN!" REFFER CURSES SILENTLY BURN
SO THAT I MAY LIVE!" THE FIGHT AGAINST
THE RADIOACTIVE GERMS MUST EVER GO
ON, LEST THE GERMS OVERWHELM THEM ALL

EVERY INFECTED BEING
BURNT MEANS ONE
MORE CHANCE AT
SURVIVAL...



THAT IS ALL THAT
MATTERS. IN EVERY
CHARRED BONE THERE
LIES ANOTHER
MINUTE OF LIFE...

IN EVERY GRINNING
SKULL... ANOTHER DAY
HE MIGHT REMAIN
UNTOUCHED BY THE



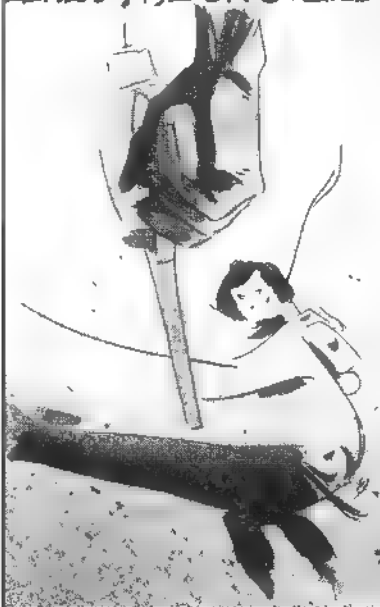
COLD HAND OF THE
RADIATION-BORN
DREASES, TRUE, THE
DEAD, THOUGH MUTANT,
HAD ONCE BEEN HUMAN
- AT LEAST IN ORIGIN -
BUT TO HELL WITH THAT!

SORROW IS A LUXURY
FOR FOOLS AND IDIOTS.
ONLY SURVIVAL MATTERS
NOW... AND ONLY THOSE



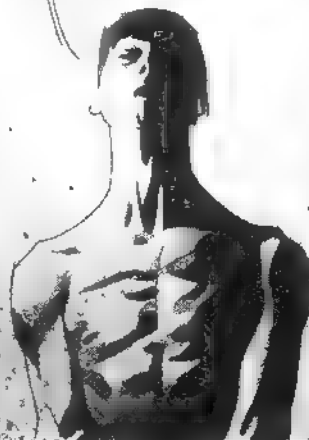
WHO BURY SORROW...
STAR PITY... BURN MERCY
MANAGE TO CARVE A
LIFE IN THE HELL
THAT IS NOW EARTH

AND ONE MUST
ALWAYS BE ON GUARD



FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT
INTERFERE WITH SUCH
AMBITIONS.

WHO GOES THERE?
FOR GODS SAKE... SPEAK UP
I'M BLIND! WHO ARE YOU?



GARBAGEMEN!



THE INFECTED ONE TURNS HIS RADIATION BLINDED EYES IN ALL
DIRECTIONS... TRYING TO PINPOINT HIS ASSAILANTS! THIS ONE
WILL NOT DIE EASILY - THAT REFFER KNOWS! EVEN IN HIS
PAIN-WRACKED STATE, HE FIGHTS TO SURVIVE. AND ALTHOUGH
BLINDED...

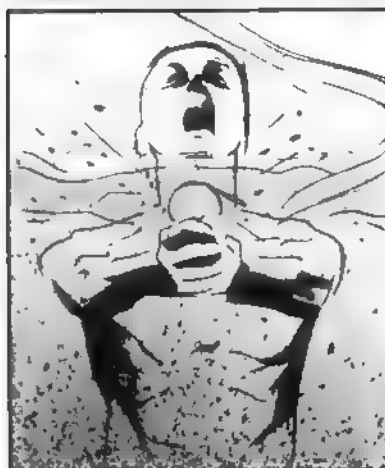
NO!



... HE STILL POSSESSES OTHER SENSES!

WHAT?





REFFER STARES HORRIFIED
AT THE BLOODED BODY IN
HIS ARMS AND FOR ONCE
FORGETS THIS WORLD GONE MAD



A WORLD IN WHICH IT HAD ONCE
BEEN COMMON BELIEF THAT
HUMANS MIGHT GIVE BIRTH TO AN
ANIMAL-LIKE MONSTER... A WORLD
IN WHICH SUCH BELIEFS COULD
OFTEN BE REVERSED INTO
ENTIRE NEW CONCEPTS //

/// AND ANIMAL LIKE MONSTER
MIGHT INSTEAD BEAR HUMAN.
FOR ONE BRIEF INSTANT REFFER
FORGETS HIS NUMBING FEARS,
AND LITTERS ONE SOFT WORD //

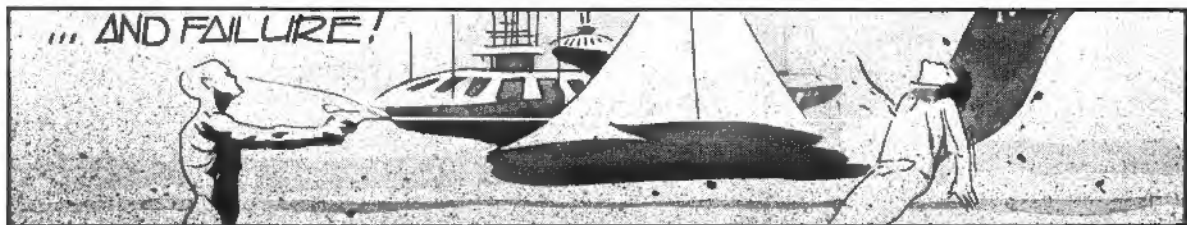


MOTHER?

OFTEN IN A MAN'S LIFE ...ONE GESTURE OR ONE WORD, MAY
BREAK THE THIN, FRAGILE LINE BETWEEN SUCCESS ...

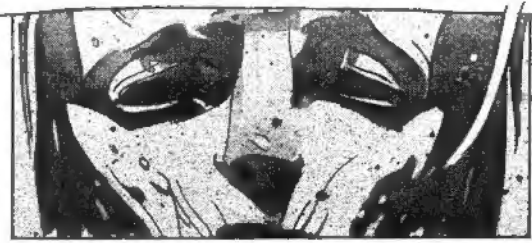


... AND FAILURE!



IN ONE BRIEF INSTANT OF
COMPASSION ... THE DREAMS
OF SURVIVAL IN A WORLD OF
DEATH ARE BROKEN
ASUNDER!

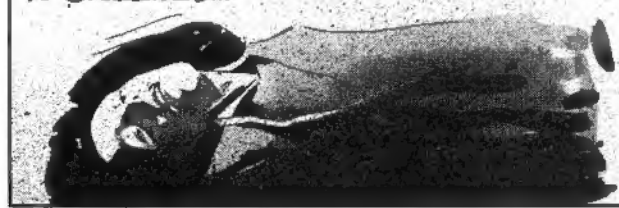
COME ON YOU FIENDS! I'M OUT OF SHELLS!
COME ON AND BURN ME! I'M SICK OF
LIVING ANYWAY ... SAY SOMETHING
DAMN YOU. SAY SOMETHING!



EYES OR LIPS TO THE FALL OF NIGHT
GLARE MADLY ABOUT THE STREET
— IT IS ONLY THE WHISPER OF THE
WIND THAT ANSWERS.

REFFER LIES QUIETLY ON STAINED PAVES, HIS LONG STRUGGLE FOR
EXISTENCE AGAINST THE GERMS AT AN END. AT LEAST HE HAS
DIED A MAN ... NOT LIKE THE INFECTED MONSTROSITIES HE LOATHED
SO GREATLY ...

BUT THEN AGAIN ...
SOFTLY, EVER SO GENTLY,
RADIOACTIVE GERMS SETTLE
AND BEGIN TO EAT THEIR WAY
INWARD ... EVEN IN DEATH THEY
WOULD HAVE THE LAST HAND.



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44 pages

Printrun of 8,000 copies

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Rich Larson 27-35(a)

Gene Day - 36-42(s)

Shel Dorf - 43(ad)

Comments:

Says "Second Printing, May 1978" on page 2.

Color added to pages 19-26